

Spring 5-2012

## **The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement at the High School Level**

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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE IMPACT OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

by

Steven Wesley Craft

Abstract of a Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

## ABSTRACT

### THE IMPACT OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

by Steven Wesley Craft

May 2012

The pressure applied on public schools to increase test scores and student achievement are reaching the highest levels ever seen in the United States. School systems are trying to find ways to increase student achievement while dealing with severe budget cuts. Many school systems are exploring the possibility of decreasing or suspending funding for extracurricular activities. This study explored the relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. The study focused on the impact that participation in extracurricular activities had grade point average, absentee rate, SAT scores, and success on the Georgia High School Graduation Test. In order to test each research question, extracurricular activities was divided into three areas: participation in sports, school music programs, and school clubs. The study found that students that participate in extracurricular activities have slightly higher grade point averages, SAT scores, success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, and miss fewer days of schools.



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A Dissertation  
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Approved:

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Director

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Dean of the Graduate School

May 2012

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer would like to thank the committee chair, Dr. Rose McNeese, and the other committee members, Dr. James Johnson, Dr. Ronald Styron, and Dr. David Lee of the University of Southern Mississippi for their expertise and assistance in support of this dissertation. The writer would also like to thank all the members of the Georgia Cohort for their support and friendship during this process. The writer acknowledges that without their support during this process, this dissertation would not have been completed. The writer would also like to thank his personal good friends Peter Giles, Courtney Harris, and C.R. for their support during this process. Finally, the writer would like to thank Dr. Angela Huff. Her forgiveness and guidance will always be appreciated.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Problem

The landscape of public education has been transformed over the past ten years. The introduction of No Child Left Behind in 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002) created an entire new wave of accountability placed on school districts and individual schools. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2002) the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was designed to improve student academic achievement, increase national test scores, raise the performance of students, and attract highly qualified professionals to the field of education. The NCLB legislation has created a different educational environment in the school systems across the country (Ryan, 2004). It forces every school system to set expectations and measurements for determining student achievement, provide support for struggling students, and create accountability within the individual states and school districts for academic success. The school systems have been forced to determine where they are going to focus their resources in order to meet all of the new accountability measures created by NCLB (Ryan, 2004). According to the No Child Left Behind Legislation, every student should be proficient in reading and math by 2014 (Gainesville Times, 2012). This legislation has forced school districts to try to meet this nearly impossible goal without giving the schools more resources. As the deadline has approached, several states have applied for a waiver to gain some leeway from the sanctions that would be imposed by the federal government if the schools did not meet this goal (Gainesville Times, 2012).

In the process of meeting of the measurements and standards created by the NCBL legislation, school districts are required to be creative in how to motivate their

students to achieve at higher rates. According to Staples (2008) schools have always strived to increase their achievement results, but the current economic situation in our country is forcing school districts to make tough economic decisions. Currently, the economy is forcing school districts to reduce school budgets, reduce the teacher workforce, reduce student activities, and cut or eliminate non-essential activities (Staples, 2008). Many school districts are cutting or eliminating their athletic programs, band programs, and music programs in order to save money for their academic programs (Lemire, 2009). Before the school districts cut the non-essential academic programs, the school districts need to research the impact these programs have on student achievement. There is a greater need to truly understand the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement.

According to Cadwallader, Garza, and Wagner (2002), extracurricular activities are defined as the activities in which the students participate after the regular school day has ended. These activities may include high school athletics, school clubs, marching band, chorus, orchestra, and student leadership organizations. It is important to note the differences between *extracurricular activities* and *co-curricular activities*. *Co-curricular* activities are activities that occur during the normal class time (Frame, 2007). Most students that participate in high school band, chorus, and orchestra spend countless hours outside of the normal class day. For this reason, these activities are classified as *extracurricular activities*.

According to Reeves (2008), there is a strong association between student involvement in extracurricular activities and improved attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Reeves (2008) explained that all students who participate in some type of extracurricular activity perform better than students who are not involved.

This involvement includes participation in sports and other school sponsored activities. Students who are consistently exposed to music perform better than students that are not exposed (Cash, 2009). Cash (2009) reported that most states do not place any academic requirements on participation in student clubs, participation in the band, participation in the chorus, and participation in the orchestra. Academic clubs such as National Honor Society, Key Club, and Beta Club do require academic requirements. In some states, the marching band might have to meet the same requirements that athletes must meet in order to participate in competition. Additionally, states and school districts set requirements for participation in school athletics based on grades, attendance, and behavior (Cash, 2009).

The state of Georgia created the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) to regulate athletics for the entire state (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). The GHSA is the governing body for athletics in the state of Georgia. This association determines what sports are offered, recognizes state champions, and determines a student's eligibility requirements for competition. The GHSA requires every student athlete to complete 2.5 units the previous semester to be eligible for competition. All freshmen are eligible when they enter high school on their first day. All sophomores must meet the 2.5 requirement, and they need to have completed 5 total units. Juniors must meet the 2.5 units the previous semester, and they need to have completed 10 total units. Seniors must have completed 16 total units, and they must meet the 2.5 unit requirement the previous semester before being allowed to participate in athletics (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). These requirements could cause more students that participate in athletics to have higher achievement rates, because they have to meet these requirements in order to compete. This study explored the relationship

between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement at the high school level in a large school district located in Georgia.

### Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for examining the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement can be found in the Institutional Theory and Institutional Logics theory. The framework for the Institutional Theory originated from examining the relationship of how one organization interacts with another organization (Selznick, 1957). It also examines the rules and regulations those organizations impose on other organizations. In order to apply this theory to participation in extracurricular activities in the school setting, the athletic departments in the schools must become individual entities that fall under the direction of the individual schools and school districts. The extracurricular activities and the students that participate in these activities must interact with the authorities that govern them. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), the Institutional Theory was expanded to explain not only the interaction between organizations but also the cultural and cognition aspect of the interactions of organizations.

After the theory was created, theorists provided a new shift that included the legitimacy of the organization instead of the existence of the organization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The Theory of Institutionalism created a link between the actions of the institution and the institution itself. The relationship of this theory to extracurricular activities and student achievement is based on the premise the extracurricular activities must operate under the control of the individual schools and school districts, and the activities may have positive or negative impacts on student achievement (Reeves, 2008).

The Institutional Logics Theory was created from the Institutional Theory (Friedland & Alford, 1991). It incorporated most of the ideas and concepts of the Institutional theory, but it also investigates the links between individuals, organizations, and society. Whitley (1998) reported that participation in extracurricular activities can have positive impacts on the students that participate in them, but the extracurricular activities can also have impacts on the school culture, the students that do not participate in them, and the school community. According to Friedland and Alford (1991), the central concept of the Institutional Logics theory is that each organization has a central purpose, vocabulary, principles, values, motivation, and identity. The theory can be applied to the students that participate in the extracurricular activities. The students have the ability to gain an identity and an immediate connection to the school by relating to other students and people in the community.

#### Problem Statement

This study investigated the relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. In today's educational world, there is a strong push from the federal and state governments to increase student achievement by stressing test scores. Every local school district must determine how they are going to increase their test scores. The school districts must determine how they are going to allocate their scarcest resource, which is money. In the current economic times, many school districts are forced to cut spending and budgets (Staples, 2008). One of the most common budget cuts is funding for athletic and extracurricular activities. School districts are cutting coaching supplements, transportation for athletics, and funding for equipment. The school districts need to determine if this is the right course of action.

The school districts need to understand the relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. They do not want to cut the funding to extracurricular activities if it is going to have a negative impact on student achievement. The ultimate goal for every student to achieve academically at the highest possible level, and participation in sports, clubs, and other extracurricular activities might help improve student achievement.

#### Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in extracurricular activities has an impact on student achievement. The current economic issues in our country are forcing many school districts to deal with severe budget cuts. One of the possible budget cuts is the reduction of extracurricular activities offered by high schools around the country. School systems spend millions of dollars every year on extracurricular activities including athletics, band, orchestra, clubs, and leadership organizations. This study helped to define the relationships between student academic achievement and extracurricular activities. Educational leaders need to consider not only what happens in the classroom, but they also need to understand the role that extracurricular activities play in the students' overall educational experiences and success (Reeves, 2008).

#### Research Questions

Extracurricular activities may play a significant role in the total high school experience. Millions of students participate in sports, band, chorus, orchestra, and student clubs. This study investigated the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement. The following hypotheses were used guide this study:



1. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their overall grade point average.
2. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their SAT scores.
3. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test results.
4. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their attendance record.
5. There was no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

#### Rationale/Significance of the Study

A study that explores the significance of participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement may provide valuable information for the school districts that are being forced to cut and eliminate non-academic programs. The economy and the current budget issues are forcing school districts to make tough economic decisions with their allocated funds. The school districts need to determine how they can best spend their resources while still increasing student achievement.

This study explored the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement. It also showed the school district if there was an impact on grade point averages, SAT scores, attendance rates, and state mandated graduation tests. The school district can then better determine how it allocates district's financial means.

#### Assumptions

During the study, the researcher operated under the following assumptions:

1. The participants who filled out the questionnaires answered honestly; and
2. The participants in the study had already attempted the SAT prior to completing the questionnaire for the study.

#### Delimitations

1. This study was delimited to twelve high schools in a large school district located in the metro Atlanta area.
2. This study was delimited to high school seniors or those classified at twelfth-grade students;
3. This study was delimited to the participants accurately self-reporting their current grade point averages and SAT scores; and
4. The study was delimited to the participants Georgia High School Graduation Tests and their attendance records.

#### Definitions

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)* - The method that each state has chosen to measure their students advancement towards reaching 100% competency on the states academic standards in both reading and math (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

*Co-curricular Activities* – These are the activities that students participate in during the normal school day. These can include sports, band, chorus, or any other

activities that take place during the normal school day. These activities do not require the student to put in extra time after the normal school day (Frame, 2007).

*Extracurricular Activities* – These are the school sponsored activities that students participate in after the normal school day. These activities include all GHSA sports (football, cheerleading, cross country, fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball, volleyball, wrestling, swim and dive, basketball, tennis, golf, baseball, track, gymnastics, lacrosse, and soccer), band, chorus, or any other school clubs (math club, foreign language club, drama club, debate club, and Fellowship of Christian Athlete) that meet after the normal school day. These activities require a commitment from the students to participate and spend time after the normal school hours (Cadwallader, et al., 2002).

*Georgia High School Association (GHSA)* – This is the governing body of high school sports in the state of Georgia. The GHSA sanctions sports and creates the rules that every sport follow. They determine which sports are played in the state of Georgia, and they recognize the state champions. The GHSA also determines the eligibility requirements that the students must meet in order to participate in the extracurricular activities (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

*Grade Point Average (GPA)* – This is the cumulative grade point average the student has earned during their four years in high school (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

*Fine Arts* – A segment of the curriculum that is dedicated to music, theater, and art (Georgia Department of Education, 2010).

*No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* – Educational Act that was signed into law on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush. The law is targeted towards

disadvantaged students, which are often left behind in their curricular needs. The accountability of this law includes annual testing for Math and English, show of academic progress through AYP, school report cards for parents to view progress, increased teacher qualifications, granted reading programs, and increased funding through Title I provisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2010)).

*Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)* – This is a college entrance exam that most students take in order to be accepted in college (use a citation for the SAT)

### Summary and Organization of the Study

The No Child Left Behind legislation has placed a greater level of accountability on every school district in the United States. The school districts have been tasked with making sure that their students are achieving at higher rates every single year. The schools must meet the Annual Yearly Progress standards established by NCLB (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a). This is forcing the school districts to assess how they are spending their local, state, and federal funds. In addition to the federal mandates, many school districts are facing significant budget cuts with the downturn of the American economy. The school districts must make sure that they are eliminating the correct programs. Many of the school districts are cutting their athletic programs, music programs, and their extracurricular programs.

This study explored the impact that participation in extracurricular activities had on student achievement. The researcher used several academic benchmarks to determine if there is a positive or negative impact on student achievement. The researcher looked at SAT scores, grade point averages, and passing rates of the Georgia High School Graduation Test. This study supplied the school districts with valuable information regarding the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on

student achievement. The districts can review the information before they make the decision to cut these programs.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Many school districts are cutting or eliminating their athletic programs, band programs, and music programs in order to save money for their academic programs (Lemire, 2009). The economy is forcing school districts to make tough decisions concerning all the programs they offer their students. Before the school districts cut the non-essential academic programs, the school districts need to investigate the impact these programs may have on student achievement. There is a greater need to truly understand the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement. The purpose of this literature review is to summarize the existing literature concerning the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement.

Public education has been transformed over the past ten years. With the introduction of No Child Left Behind in 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), an entire new wave of accountability has been placed on school districts and individual schools. The No Child Left Behind Act was designed to improve student academic achievement, increase national test scores, raise the performance of students, and attract highly qualified professionals to the field of education (Ryan, 2004). The NCLB act has created a different educational environment in the school systems across the country. It holds every school system accountable for setting expectations and measurements for determining student achievement, providing support for struggling students, and creating accountability standards and assessments within the states and school districts for academic success (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The

school systems have been challenged to determine where they will focus their resources in order to meet all of the new accountability measures created by NCLB.

In the process of meeting of the accountability measures established by the No Child Left Behind legislation, school districts are required to be creative in ways to motivate their students to achieve at higher rates. Schools have always strived to increase their achievement results, but the current economic situation in the United States is forcing school districts to make tough decisions. According to Rieman (2008), the budget shortcomings will force schools to make tough decisions including: reducing the budget, laying off teachers, reducing media center personnel, and cutting school nurses. The economic issues have been caused by the decline of the housing market, a decrease in tax collections, and increasing fuel prices (Rieman, 2008). The US economy is forcing school districts to reduce school budgets, reduce the teacher workforce, reduce student activities, and cut or eliminate non-essential activities (Staples, 2008). As the economy continues to decline, the school districts will be forced to be creative with their limited financial resources.

#### Impacts of the No Child Left Behind Legislation and Waiver

In order to understand the impact of the No Child Left Behind Legislation, it is important to understand the impact that this legislation and the federally granted waivers will have on local school systems. According to the No Child Left Behind Legislation, every student in the United States should be proficient in math and reading by 2014. Many states have already determined that they will not meet this goal, and they want to avoid the penalties associated with not meeting this deadline (Gainesville Times, 2012). The critics of the legislation said that the deadline was unrealistic, the law was too rigid, and it led to teachers teaching to the test to try to get the wanted

results. Many schools were labeled as failures, because they were not making the adequate yearly progress. According to the Center on Education Policy, nearly half of the schools failed to meet the requirements established under the No Child Left Behind Legislation in 2011 (Gainesville Times, 2012).

The failures of the schools and the potential failures of the schools not reaching the deadline of 2014 has led to several states filing for a waiver from the federal government. President Obama officially announced that ten states including the state of Georgia will receive a waiver from the federal Government (Gainesville Times, 2012). The waiver will allow the states the opportunity to improve on how they prepare and evaluate their students. As long as the state can produce a viable and acceptable plan of action, they will be granted leeway and flexibility from the consequences of the 2014 deadline. According to the Gainesville Times (2012), a total of 28 other states including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia will apply for the waiver. The states that received the waiver will still be required to annually test their students, but they will not avoid the consequences of the legislation. Ultimately, the waiver will grant the schools more flexibility in how they reach the ultimate goal of making every student proficient in all areas.

The State of Georgia was granted the waiver by President Obama and the federal government. This waiver will have a drastic impact on the state meets the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). According to Melissa Morse (2012), the Director of Instructional Administration Curriculum and Instruction, the AYP will no longer be based on the English and Math test scores of the Georgia High School Graduation test. These two scores and the graduation rate were used to determine the adequate yearly progress for high schools across the state of Georgia. Now, the school districts will use



an Index created by the state to meet the federal guidelines. The College and Career Ready Performance Index will be based on all of the state End of Course Exams, attendance rates, graduation rates, pathways, dual enrollment numbers, and Advanced Placement Exams (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). This waiver represents a more holistic approach to calculating the adequate yearly progress for a school. In the past, AYP was determined by two days of testing and the graduation rate. Now, this index will be applied to multiple measures to determine the adequate yearly progress.

The College and Career Ready Performance Index will create other impacts in the local schools. For years, schools have focused on the Georgia High School Graduation Test administered during a student's junior year of high school. Schools will now be forced to focus on the End of Course Tests throughout the student's four years. This will change school wide remediation and tutoring programs established to assist the juniors for the graduation test. The Georgia Graduation test will no longer have any importance, and it will completely disappear by 2013 (Morse, 2012).

Another change that will occur with the waiver granted to the state of Georgia is how schools will be classified. In the past, schools were labeled Met or Does not Meet AYP. Now the schools will receive a report card with performance flags (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). The schools can receive a green flag, yellow flag, or a red flag. The green flag indicates that the school has met both the State Performance Target and the Subgroup Performance Target. The yellow flag indicates that a school did not meet either the State Performance Target or the Subgroup Performance Target. The yellow flag will be labeled with an S or SG. The SG stands for Subgroup and the S stands for Performance Target. The red flag indicates that the school did not meet either requirement.

There will also be a component allowing schools to show growth in either the State Performance Target or the Subgroup Performance Target. This will allow a school to move from one flag to another without possibly meeting the pre-set target. This is a way to reward the schools that are making progress but have yet to meet the target. This component is still being discussed at the state level (Morse, 2012).

The drastic changes in meeting adequate yearly progress have changed the landscape for schools. The local school districts are going to have to continue to evaluate the most effective ways to meet the targets while still dealing with the budget constraints. School systems will continue to evaluate all programs available to help their students achieve at the highest possible standards. With all the changes facing the school districts, the districts must look at all options including the impact of participation in extracurricular activities.

### Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are defined as the activities in which the students participate after the regular school day has ended (Cadwallader, et al., 2002). Among those activities considered to be high school extracurricular activities include high school athletics, school clubs, marching band, chorus, orchestra, and student leadership organizations. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will make a distinction between *extracurricular activities* and *co-curricular activities*. Co-curricular activities are activities that occur during the normal class time (Frame, 2007), such as high school band, chorus, and orchestra where students spend countless hours outside of the normal structure of the school day for practice and performances. This involvement includes participation in sports and other school sponsored activities. It has been noted that students who are consistently exposed to music perform better academically in school

than students who do not engage in music training or performances (Cash, 2009). Cash (2009) also shared that most states do not place academic requirements on participation in student clubs, band, chorus, or orchestra. However, academic clubs such as National Honor Society, Key Club, and Beta Club do mandate certain levels of academic achievement to be allowed to become a member. In some states, the marching band might have to meet the same requirements that athletes are required to meet in order to participate in competition (Cash, 2009).

Most states and school districts do set requirements for participation in school athletics based on grades, attendance, and behavior (Cash, 2009). Eligibility requirements are established to ensure that the high school athletes maintain a certain level of academic integrity (McMillan, 1991). McMillan (1991) found that most of the requirements were based on a *pass to play* standard. If the student athletes do not pass their classes, then they are not allowed to participate in the extracurricular activities. McMillan (1991) also reported that this standard was important to make sure that the athletes understood the importance of achieving academic success as well as athletic success. The use of the pass to play standard has shown that there may be a relationship between student achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. As teachers and school administrators have encouraged student athletes to perform better academically using the opportunity to participate in athletics, this has served as a motivation for students to perform academically and has served as the foundation for the pass to play standard. The athletes are aware that they may not be able to compete if they are not achieving desirable results in the classroom. This standard also been shown to promote higher attendance rates for the athletes (McMillan, 1991).

On one hand, the pass to play policy can create positive motivation for the student athlete to perform academically and to attend school; however on the other hand, the policy can also have a negative impact in the classroom. According to Morton (1993), if the student does not perform well enough in the classroom to be able to compete in athletics, the student may lose their motivation to succeed in the classroom. Many students have reported that participating in sports is the sole reason that keeps them from dropping out of school. The perplexing reality of the pass to play standard is those students who lose the opportunity to compete in sports due to lack of success academically, they might stop attending school or trying to achieve passing grades in the classroom (Morton, 1993). Ruffin (1986) found that the pass to play standard may also have an impact on the classroom teachers. Classroom teachers faced with extra pressure to make sure that student athletes remain eligible to participate in sports must be able to hold every student to the same standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Ruffin (1986) also shared that teachers must not create a double standard in their classrooms for athletes and other students, they have a legal and ethical responsibility to treat all students equitably, regardless of the pass to play standard.

The state of Georgia created the Georgia High School Association to regulate athletics for the entire state (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). The GHSA serves as the governing body for all sanctioned high school athletics in the state of Georgia. Each high school is required to pay dues and join the GHSA if they want their student athletes to be able to compete for region and state championships (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). The GHSA also provides guideline that all student athletes must meet in the state of Georgia. This guideline states that student athletes must meet certain academic requirements, age requirements, residency requirements,

and semester to semester academic progress requirements. If the student athlete cannot meet all parts of the eligibility requirements, then they are not allowed to compete in the GHSA sanctioned athletic events. This association was designed to protect high school athletics in the state of Georgia, and it is designed to make sure that athletes are able to meet the National Collegiate Athletic Association requirements (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

The requirements established by the Georgia High School Association for residency are very specific (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). If the athlete wants to compete for a high school, they must live in the school district. Every school has its own residency zone, and the athlete must live in the school district's zone. The athlete must also live with their legal parents or guardians. This requirement mandates student athletes to compete for the school within the school district that they currently reside. This policy was designed to make sure the student athletes compete for their home schools (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

The GHSA residency policy does allow athletes to transfer to another school, but there must be a *bona fide* move (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). A bona fide move occurs when a student athlete moves into a new district with their legal guardians. The entire family must move from one school zone into another school zone. The entire family must move from a house in one district to another house in a different district. This policy was created to stop the illegal recruiting of high school athletes by other coaches or schools, to stop student athletes from transferring from low performing athletic schools to high performing schools, and to protect the integrity and concept of a student athlete (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

The academic requirements created by the Georgia High School Association (2010b) specifically spell out the requirements an athlete must meet in the classroom and the progressive increase of the requirements as the student athlete passes to through each grade in high school. The GHSA requires every student athlete to complete 2.5 units the previous semester to be eligible for competition. This rule applies to all students except for incoming freshmen. All freshmen are eligible when they enter high school on their first day. They establish their eligibility at the high school that they attend on the first day, and they have four consecutive years of eligibility from their start date. The GHSA grants them eligibility for eight consecutive semesters or four straight school years. The students need to have passed 2.5 units the previous semester, but they also need to have completed yearly requirements towards their graduation. All sophomores must meet the 2.5 requirement, and they need to have completed 5 total units. Juniors must meet the 2.5 units the previous semester, and they need to have completed 10 total units. Seniors must have completed 16 total units, and they had to meet the 2.5 unit requirement the previous semester. In order to earn the 2.5 units, the student must earn a passing grade of 70 percent or higher in the classes that they are enrolled. This data is reviewed every semester to determine the eligibility of the student athletes in every single Georgia High School. The GHSA eligibility requirements for 2010 include:

1. All Students are eligible on the first day they enter high school;
2. By the end of the first year of high school the student must have earned 5 academic Units;
3. By the end of the second year of high school, the student must have earned 11 academic Units; and

4. By the end of the third year of high school, the student must have earned 16 academic Units (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

According to the Georgia High School Association (2010b), the age requirement for student eligibility was determined as soon as the student athlete enrolled at his or her high school. In the state of Georgia, a student athlete is able to participate in extracurricular activities starting their ninth grade year and continuing until the student becomes 19 years old (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). The cutoff date for eligibility is set for May 1 for each school year. If the athlete turns 19 prior to the start of the season of his chosen sport, they will be ruled ineligible by the GHSA. This age requirement was created to promote safety in athletic events and to ensure fair competition. This policy ensures that the athletes are competing against other athletes of the same age range.

If an athlete does not meet all of these requirements, then they are ruled ineligible. If an athlete is ruled ineligible, he is not allowed to practice or compete during that semester. The eligibility of student athletes is evaluated at the start of every new semester. The Georgia High School Association will punish the member schools if they play ineligible athletes. If a school plays an ineligible athlete, the games that the athlete competed in will be forfeited. The school will also receive various financial fines. It is the responsibility of the school administration and coaches to make sure that every athlete competing at their school meets all of the eligibility requirements (Georgia High School Association, 2010b).

The Georgia High School Association (2010b) also placed requirements on how much participation the athletes are allowed during the week or school day. A football player may only play a combination of six quarters of junior varsity or varsity football

in a one week period. A basketball player may only compete in five quarters in the same day. This must be a combination of junior varsity and varsity competition. Some sports such as volleyball restrict the number of matches an athlete may play in one day. These requirements can change on the weekend and during holiday times, because the athletes do not have school the following day. These requirements were created to ensure that the student athletes had sufficient time to complete their academic requirements in the classroom. The GHSA works to ensure that academics are not affected in a negative manner by participation in athletic competitions.

Since all athletes must meet these academic requirements, student athletes might have higher grade point averages than the average student. The average student does not have to meet any minimum requirement. Does this mean that athletes will generally have higher academic results than regular students? The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement.

### Importance of Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities are a key component of many schools. Reynolds (1996) explained that schools stress many different pillars in trying to create a well-rounded education. Many of these pillars include academics, service and leadership, fine arts, and athletics. Principals recognize the importance of providing many opportunities for their students to find success. These activities allow students to develop leadership, create lasting friendships, give back to their community, belong to the school family, and find success outside of the classroom. Extracurricular activities can enhance a student's life, and they can give the students additional skills that they will use for the remainder of their lives (Reynolds, 1996). Klesse (1994) found that



there was a positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and success in high school, college, career, and the community. He shared further that many students need these extracurricular activities to motivate them to be successful in the classroom. Some students earn college scholarships based on their extracurricular activities (sports, fine arts, etc.). Many of these students would not have the opportunity to attend college unless they had enjoyed remarkable success in these activities (Klesse, 1994).

#### Structured Extracurricular Activities Versus Non-Structured

Fujita (2005) suggested that it is very important to divide extracurricular activities between structured and non-structured activities. These can also be classified as formal versus informal activities. The *formal or structured activities* could include team sports, school clubs, marching band, chorus, or any other school activity. The *informal activities* would include watching television or hanging out with friends (Fujita, 2005). According to Marsh and Kleitman (2002), students who participate in formal or structured extracurricular activities have higher academic test scores and grade point averages. Students who spend a great deal of time with informal extracurricular activities demonstrate poorer work habits and lower test scores than those who participated in formal activities (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

#### Importance of Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Before studying the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement, it is important to review why sports and participation in activities are important to students. As Principals in high schools and middle schools are expected to balance budgets and possibly cut programs, consequently they are interested in investigating the relationship between participation

in extracurricular activities and student achievement before cuts are mandated. Fujita (2005) reported that since the introduction of public schools, children have always been encouraged to participate in some type of physical activity or get involved in some type of extracurricular activity, like (school sports, marching band, chorus, and school clubs. The trend of encouraging students to participate in extracurricular activities really started to grow in the early 1900s (Fujita, 2005). Recently, educational researchers have adopted a more positive perspective in regards to students participating in extracurricular activities. Marsh and Kleitman (2002) noticed positive impacts in the areas of student achievement for students involved in extracurricular activities. In most school districts in the state of Georgia, middle school children are required to attend band classes, chorus classes, and art classes (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a). In the state of Georgia, students in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools are also required to complete physical education requirements (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a). These classes are required before the students are allowed to graduate in the state of Georgia. Students in elementary schools and middle schools are also encouraged to engage in physical activity during recess during the school day. As the students grow older, the importance of physical activity increases. The state of Georgia requires these classes to help the students become healthier adults after graduation (Georgia Department of Education, 2010a).

According to Medline Plus (2010), children need at least an hour of physical activity every single day. Exercise will allow children to feel less stressed, feel better about themselves as people, feel more ready to learn in school, keep a healthy weight, build healthy bodies, and sleep better at night. In addition to being physically active, sports will teach children to develop their fundamental motor skills. Many students turn

to competitive sports to help stay fit. According to the Mayo Clinic (2010), children's sports promote fitness and help to prevent obesity. There are hundreds of activities that are age appropriate to all children. It is important to offer children a wide variety of choices. As they grow older and more mature, children will select the sports and activities that they enjoy. These activities will provide benefits to children inside and outside of school. This involvement in extracurricular activities will help the students throughout their educational careers and adult lives. They will learn positive habits that they will develop for the entire lives.

Individual high school students who participate in athletic events show a lower rate of obesity when compared to other individuals that do not participate in athletic events (Yancey, 2007). These individuals also show better overall health and the ability to make better personal decisions. Individuals that stay physically active learn better nutritional habits. These habits lead to a healthier day-to-day existence (Yancey, 2007). The students that remain healthier have more energy to devote to their activities and school studies.

The students that participate in athletics also tend to make fewer poor decisions in their daily lives. These students tend to make positive choices about smoking, drinking, and the use of legal and illegal drugs (Burnette, 2001). The student athletes will make less destructive decisions than the students that do not participate in athletics. The healthier and wiser choices allow the students to be more successful in all of their endeavors.

Studies are now showing that students who are involved in physical education or exposed to music and the arts achieve at a higher rate than students who are not exposed (Shute, 2008). Research is also now showing that participation in extracurricular

activities will have a positive impact on a student's academic performance (Fujita, 2005). Studies are showing that students who participate in extracurricular activities have higher grade point averages, lower absenteeism, higher educational aspirations, and increased college attendance.

Since the passing of No Child Left Behind, school districts have reduced the amount of time that students spend in physical education, music, and art classes. The schools were forced to spend more time focused on the four core educational areas, and this resulted in a reduction of time in the physical education classes, band classes, and other non-core subject areas. This reduction in time might hurt student achievement instead of helping student achievement. Several studies conducted around the world are revealing that more exposure in these areas results in higher academic gains for both boys and girls (Shute, 2008). The Dana group conducted a search in 2005 that determined that children who spend time around music will perform better in math and reading compared to other students who do not have this exposure (Shute, 2008).

#### The Hidden Curriculum of Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Another outcome of students participating in extracurricular activities is the benefits gained from the hidden curriculum imbedded in all team sports and activities. Children who participate in team sports typically do better in school, have better interpersonal skills, are generally healthier, and are more team oriented (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). Children are provided an arena to gain respect and attention from adults and their friends by using their natural abilities. The children that play sports also learn how rules work. They see the need of rules when there is a group of people involved. They also see the benefit of competition in a safe and secure environment.

According to Metzl and Shookhoff (2002), sports provide physical benefits, personal benefits, and social benefits. These are some of the most important aspects of the hidden curriculum. Almost every single team sport will encompass these aspects in some form or fashion. To better understand the hidden curriculum of sports, it is important to explore the physical, personal, and social benefits of participation.

The physical benefits include better fitness, stress relief, skill mastery, and healthy habits. Kids who remain active on a daily basis learn healthy habits that create life long active adults (KidsHealth, 2010). Children that are active develop strong muscles and bones, control their weight, sleep better, have a better outlook on life, and perform better in schools (KidsHealth, 2010). Sports provide them a fun way to stay in shape, and this is extremely important as childhood obesity is growing. Sports also allow children to deal with stress. They allow children to clear their minds and remove themselves from social and school pressures. Athletics also allow children to gain mastery over their personal skills. Participating in sports can socialize adolescents in ways that will promote educational success (Hass, 2004). When they have success, they feel positive about themselves. They can also see the benefits of practice when they enjoy success. These are habits that these students will continue to develop over their adult lives. They are learning healthy work ethics that will help them for the remainder of their academic careers and later in life. Sports also lead to healthy habits by encouraging children to stay in shape and avoid drug and alcohol use. Studies are showing that healthy students achieve at higher rates than other students who do not develop healthy habits.

The personal benefits include the teaching of preparation, resilience, leadership, time management, and balance in life (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). Sports teach

children the value of preparing for challenges. They can see the benefit of practicing for the competition. Athletes need to be prepared mentally and physically. Sports can also teach children resilience. Athletes have to learn how to deal with success and failure. Every person who competes in athletics will fail at some point. They will lose a game or they will become injured. Children need to learn how to bounce back from these setbacks. This is a lifelong lesson that can be applied to their entire life. Sports will also teach children the importance of time management. Children will have to balance their time between school, athletics, friends, and any other activities in which they are currently participating. Using their time productively is a skill that every person needs to develop for lifelong success.

Another important personal benefit taught by sports is leadership (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). Participation in sports and other activities gives children the opportunity to develop leadership abilities that they will use for their entire lives. Sports allow students to become role models for other students. They can learn how to inspire their teammates to work hard. They can learn how to minimize conflicts. They can demonstrate great sportsmanship on a daily basis. They can also learn how to take the initiative in leading their teammates. According to Metzl and Shookhoff (2002), leadership ability might be the most important benefit of sports. This leadership ability that the athletes learn while competing in athletics will allow them to demonstrate their leadership ability in their professional lives. This is a skill that everyone needs to develop.

The social benefits include the development of relationships with other kids, relationships with adults, and teamwork (Hass, 2004). Participation in sports can teach characteristics such as a strong work ethic, respect for authority, and perseverance.

These traits will help the participants athletically and educationally. The development of relationships is extremely important in sports. Every child will develop a relationship with the other children on their team. Sometimes these relationships can be negative, but in most cases, these relationships are extremely positive. These relationships become the athlete's social network. This is especially true of boys (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). Participation in sports provides the children the opportunity to develop friends and positive peer groups. Children have a need to belong, and sports can help to meet this need. Many athletes spend time with other athletes that share the same motivation for success. By spending time with motivated teammates, many students become more motivated in the classroom and on the playing field.

Teamwork is a valuable benefit of sports (Woloch, 2010). This is not an easy concept to learn. It takes years of hard work to develop good teamwork. Teamwork can be defined as a group of similar people working together to achieve a common goal (Gib, 2010). Children must learn the importance of relying on other people. They also understand that other people are relying on them. Teamwork teaches personal responsibility. It also teaches the concepts of cooperation, camaraderie, and sacrifice. Participation in sports can show children how a group of individuals can work together to achieve great moments. It takes every single person to be successful on a team sport. One of the greatest aspects of teamwork is that children are not just learning from a coach. They are also learning from the people on their team. Children will make good decisions and they can make poor decisions, but all of the decisions affect their teammates (Hass, 2004).

Another social benefit of sports is the introduction of diversity (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). Participation in sports will allow children to meet other children

from different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnic groups. The diversity in the group can help children to learn from their teammates. They can understand the different circumstances that people face on a daily basis. Sports can be a great equalizer. If people are talented and are willing to work hard, they can have great success. Children need to learn this lesson at an early age.

Time management is another important aspect of the hidden curriculum. All students that are involved in extracurricular activities must balance their time (Metzl & Shookhoff, 2002). They need to devote time to practice, games, and participation. They need to do this while still performing at a high level in the classroom. Many student athletes actually perform better during their season, because they are forced to successfully balance academics and participation. The students tend to be more motivated to succeed in the classroom if they have to meet certain academic requirements in the classroom. By balancing practice time (sports, performing arts, or clubs) with school academics, these students use their time more efficiently.

Finally, building relationships with adults is a great benefit of playing sports. In some cases, it allows parents and children to view each other in another light. Sports will provide an opportunity for children and adults to spend time with each other. Coaches can become role models for athletes. In some cases, they might even become parent figures for children. Children can also learn healthy ways to build positive relationships with adults through after school programs. The after school programs allow students the opportunity to build positive relationships with adults (Council of Accreditation, 2011). Students are more likely to continue participating in extracurricular programs and after school programs if they have established a positive relationship with the adult or coach. The relationships built with their coaches,



teachers, and administrators might enable the students to achieve at higher rates in the classroom. Studies have shown that students who have parents that are actively involved in their lives achieve higher results than students who do not have parental involvement (Klesse, 1994). This allows the students that need more support to have access to people that care about their well-being. Extracurricular activities give many student athletes the opportunity to be a part of the school family.

### Types of Extracurricular Activities

After reviewing the benefits of sports and extracurricular activities, it is important to review the types of extracurricular activities offered in the majority of the high schools in the southeastern part of the United States. At the high school level, the following sports are offered in most high schools in the state of Georgia. Students can participate in football, cheerleading, cross country, fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball, volleyball, wrestling, swim and dive, basketball, tennis, golf, baseball, track, gymnastics, lacrosse, and soccer (Georgia High School Association, 2010b). Many of these sports are offered to male and female athletes. They are also offered in different levels: 9<sup>th</sup> grade, junior varsity, and varsity. There are also several non-athletic extracurricular activities available to the students. Students can participate in the marching band, chorus, orchestra, and culinary arts. Students can also join school sponsored clubs including: the math club, chess club, ping pong club, rugby club, fencing club, card games club, foreign language club, drama club, debate club, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). Students can also join service/leadership organizations. They can join the student government, Habitat for Humanity, Key Club, and the Interact Club. The choices offered to students at the high school level are almost limitless. They just need to make the decision to get involved.

### Impact on Student Achievement

After examining the theoretical background of why participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged, it is necessary to explore the literature discussing the impact that participation has on student achievement. The impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement has been debated for several years. Some researchers claim that there is a positive impact, and there are some researchers that claim there are negative impacts. There are several different benchmarks to measure this impact at the high school level. Student achievement can be measured by examining grade point averages (GPA), SAT/ACT test results, and state mandated graduation tests like the Georgia High School Graduation Test. According to Eccles and Barber (1999), adolescents who are involved in extracurricular activities achieve at higher rates than children who are not involved in activities. A study of 1259 10<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents found that involvement in team sports, school leadership groups, school spirit activities, academic clubs, and performing arts resulted in higher GPAs when these students became 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

In the United States, the overall high school experience includes athletic competition. Athletics has a great impact on the school culture through the competition or the rituals created by the competition (Burnette, 2001). The athletic competition helps to create the high school experience. For the students, this experience impacts whether they have a successful high school experience. Some researchers have determined that participation in extracurricular activities has a positive impact on student achievement (Whitley, 1998). There are some researchers that concluded that participation in extracurricular activities has a negative impact on student achievement (McMillen, 1991).

In 2005, a study was conducted to examine the relationship between participants in athletics and the student's grade point averages (White, 2005). The researcher divided the participants into two categories: low participants and high participants. The high and low participant rating was determined by the number of years the student spent participating in athletics during their high school years. A high participant was a student that participated in athletics an equal number of years that they attended high school (White, 2005). A low participant was a student that might have only participated in basketball for two years. They were classified as a low participant because they played two seasons but attended high school for four years. The results showed that there was a positive impact on student achievement by participating in athletics. The students that were classified in the high participant category had higher grade point averages than the students that were classified in the low participant category (White, 2005).

In another study conducted in the state of New York also showed positive impacts on student achievement when the students participated in extracurricular activities. This study compared the grade point averages for 123 soccer players in season and out of season (Silliker & Quirk, 1997). The research was conducted on 59 male soccer players and 64 female soccer players at five different high schools. The data revealed that the students had significantly higher grade point averages during the soccer season than when they were out of season.

Another study explored the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and grade point averages. This study compared the grade point averages for sophomores and juniors when they were competing in sports and when they were out-of-season (Sitkowski, 2008). The data showed that the male athletes had higher grade

point averages when they were participating in athletics compared to when they were not participating in athletics. There was a significant increase in the grade point average for the athletes in-season compared to out-of-season. While the study showed a positive impact for the male athletes, it did not show an increase for the female athletes. The results did not show a significant statistical difference in the grade point averages for the females while they were in-season athletes compared to when they were out-of-season athletes (Sitkowski, 2008).

According to Stephens and Schaben, a study conducted by the United States Department of Education revealed that students who were involved in extracurricular and co-curricular activities were three times more likely to have a grade point average of 3.0 or higher (2002). These results suggest that students need to get involved in the various activities offered in their school settings. The results also revealed that students would have better academic results regardless of their backgrounds if they were involved in extracurricular activities (Stephens & Schaben, 2002). The trend of the current studies examining student achievement and extracurricular activities suggest that participation has a positive impact on student achievement.

According to Hollrah, involvement in extracurricular activities has a large impact on student achievement (2001). She conducted a study involving college-aged students who were involved in extracurricular activities in high school to discover if there was a correlation between involvement in activities and academic achievement. After questioning almost three hundred college students that participated in extracurricular activities, her research indicated that participation in extracurricular activities enhances the intellectual and social development of students. She also

discovered that athletes earned higher grade point averages than students who did not participate in athletics.

Her study also showed that through participation in extracurricular activities participants learned character building lessons that they could apply to their daily lives and study habits. These participants learned how to practice to be successful whether they were involved in athletics, drama, or the marching band. She also felt that they took pride in their activities, and they achieved greater success than students not involved in activities (Hollrah, 2001).

A study conducted by Hass (2004), the Activities Director at Ogilvie High School, concluded that participation in extracurricular activities did have a positive impact on student achievement. He states that participating in sports socializes adolescents in ways that promotes educational success. Athletes are taught discipline and a strong work ethic. These two aspects lead athletes to be successful in the classroom. Hass determined that these traits are part of the hidden curriculum of athletics. This study also determined that athletes are promoted to a higher peer group. This is a positive aspect of athletics, because the higher peer group tends to be comprised of motivated students that perform well academically. The athletes perform higher in school to fit into their peer groups. The final result of this study states that athletes perform higher in academics due to their constant interaction with adults. Coaches and parents monitor the athletes' academic performance. They will always try to motivate their athletes to perform at the highest level (Hass, 2004).

According to Mark Rivera (2010), participation in extracurricular activities had a great impact on his academic achievement. Mark was a very poor-performing student prior to getting involved in athletics. He constantly made C's, D's, and F's on his

report cards. Then he started getting involved in extracurricular activities. He discovered that involvement in these activities made him a more focused student. He turned his D's and F's into A's and B's. Mark understood that in order to stay involved in activities he needed to perform better academically. Participation in extracurricular activities forced him to create balance in his life in regards to athletics and academics.

A study conducted in 1996 involving 126,700 students in 133 high schools looked at academic performance, graduation rates, school behavior, and absenteeism rates (Whitley, 1998). This study reported that there was a positive impact on student achievement when students participated in extracurricular activities. The researcher divided the student population into four subgroups. These subgroups included black male athletes, black female athletes, black male non-athletes, and black female non-athletes. The results of the study showed a strong difference between the athletes and non-athletes when comparing the student's grade point averages. The groups that contained the athletes had significantly higher grade point averages (Whitley, 1998). Overall, the study indicated that there were positive impacts on student achievement, student behavior, and absenteeism rates. The study focused on 21 different areas, and the results indicated positive impacts on 20 of the 21 areas for the students that were also athletes.

According to a study conducted by Dr. Din, a professor at the University of Virginia, there is no significant difference between participating in sports activities and student achievement for rural high school students (Din, 2006). This study showed that there are benefits of participation in athletics, but the benefits did not include increased student achievement. This study examined 225 students in rural Kentucky. The pre-season grades and post season grades of the participants in English, math, science, and

social science were recorded. After comparing the results, the data analysis indicated that there were no significant differences found. The athletes did not perform better or worse. Dr. Din did admit that there were several limitations to his study. His sample group was relatively small, and he only chose students living in a very rural area in the Appalachian Mountains in Kentucky.

Participation in extracurricular activities can also lead to an increase in self-esteem (Helm, 1991). As the students gain more self-confidence, they start to expect to achieve success in all areas of their lives. Helm conducted a study of 241 randomly selected ninth graders in Fayette County, Kentucky. The students that perceived themselves in a more positive light were also the students that were more involved in extracurricular activities. These students also had fewer absences, which leads to the students spending more time in the classroom. Helm felt that his results were similar to other studies conducted around the country. Students that participate in extracurricular activities tend to have more self-esteem, and they also tend to perform better academically in the classroom.

#### Impacts of Participation in Band and Music Programs on Student Achievement

As many school districts across the country are experiencing serious financial issues, school systems are making tough decisions on how they are going to allocate their scarce economic resources. Many are decreasing or eliminating their music and band programs. The districts are choosing to devote their resources to the academic core subjects instead of the fine arts electives. The Shawnee Mission School District in Kansas investigated the impact of continuing the music and band programs (Circle, 2010). The discussion in the school district centered on pulling students out of their academic classes to attend the electives (Band and Chorus). The band and chorus

teachers argued that their classes did not hurt the student's academic performance. They suggested that their students benefited from these classes. The school system studied the student's academic results that participated in these pull out classes for band and chorus. The results showed that these students performed better than the students who did not participate in these pull out classes (Circle, 2010). The school system determined two major results from the study. First, the pull-out classes did not hurt the academic growth of the students in terms of their reading and math scores. Secondly, they could not determine if these classes were beneficial. The school district determined that it was impossible to distinguish if the results were just based on better academic students wanting to take these classes. As a result, the Shawnee Mission School District has decided to continue to investigate the role that band and music has on student achievement before they determine the future of these programs (Circle, 2010).

There have been several studies conducted to determine if there is a relationship between exposure to music and student achievement. According to a new study conducted by *Social Science Quarterly*, music lessons in school and outside of school have a positive impact on reading and mathematical scores (Southgate & Roscigno, 2009). Two professors at Ohio State, determined that music has a positive association with academic achievement. Southgate and Roscigno (2009) determined that this association was even stronger for students during their high school years. The study also revealed that not all adolescents have the same opportunity to participate in music or band programs. The socioeconomic status of the students plays a significant role in their amount of exposure to music. The lower socioeconomic students tend to have less exposure to music and band programs. Besides the students social class, the students



ethnicity is also a predictor of exposure to music and band programs. Southgate and Roscigno believe that this information will have a major impact on federal, state, and local school levels. These agencies need to determine how to use resources to help all students. The development of music and band programs in the schools can allow all students to have more exposure. These programs can be successful despite the predictors of ethnicity and social class (Southgate & Roscigno, 2009).

According to the College Entrance Examination board in 2006, students that had studied music performed higher than students that did not on the SAT (College Board, 2006). Students that had coursework/experience in music performance scored fifty seven points higher than students that had no music experience on the verbal part of the test. The students with music experience also scored forty three points higher in the math section. The study also determined that students that had music appreciation scored sixty two points higher on the verbal and forty one points higher on the math section.

Another study conducted by Catterall, Chapeleau, and Iwanganga (1999) also determined that participation in music and band had a positive impact on test scores. This study showed that students involved in music and band performed higher than students that were not involved in these programs. The study tracked the results of 25,000 students over a 10-year period. The study found that these students performed higher on the SAT and other reading proficiency exams. This study also determined that students involved in music and band performed higher than other students regardless of the student's socioeconomic background.

Ponter (1999) found there was a positive relationship between academic performance and participation in music. Ponter (1999) suggested that the music

curriculum become a fundamental part of the educational experience. This strand of curriculum should be stressed as much as math, reading, and science (Ponter, 1999). These studies show that students that have received training with musical instruments perform better in areas of math, science, and engineering. Ponter determined that the students who had received musical training performed much higher than students who did not receive musical training. Researchers have also determined that musical training helps the students to develop higher critical thinking skills. This development allows the students to achieve at higher rates throughout their academic careers (Kelstrom, 1998). According to Ponter (1999), students who had received musical training scored 51 to 61 points higher on the verbal section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test than students that did not have musical training. These same students scored 39 to 46 points higher on the math section.

#### Participation in Service/Leadership Clubs

Many schools around the country are now requiring students to complete a certain number of volunteer hours in order to be able to meet their graduation requirements. Students have many choices to determine how they want to meet the service requirement. They can complete service hours by getting involved in their churches, school service clubs, or any other service organizations. Most high schools offer Beta Club, National Honor Society, Habitat for Humanity, Key Club, and many other service organizations. Studies are now showing that participation in community service and volunteer activities has a positive impact on student achievement (Hinck & Brandell, 1999). Many of the service projects can be linked directly to academic learning. The studies are showing that academic growth is increased when the service activities are directly tied to academic content (Hinck & Brandell, 1999). According to

Hinck and Brandell (1999), the Texas Council of Chief State School officers reported that “involvement in service learning affects students’ higher level thinking skills, motivation to learn, application of learning, insight, and basic academic skills.” These studies found that the student’s background (economic or ethnic) did not play a role in the improved academic results. Simply stated, there is a positive relationship between academic achievement and involvement in service and leadership activities.

### Summary

Even though there are conflicting results, the review of literature does seem to reveal that there is a positive relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement. The majority of the studies indicate that there is a positive impact on grade point averages (GPA) and scholastic aptitude tests (SAT) results when the students participate in extracurricular activities. The literature review also points out several other positive impacts of participation in extracurricular activities. Students that are involved in activities tend to have higher self-esteem, develop better social skills, and build better relationships with friends and adults. The review of literature also reveals that the students that participate in extracurricular activities also live healthier lives and make better decisions concerning their health. The results vary from study to study, and there are no studies investigating the impact on the Georgia High School Graduation Test. The literature review points to a need for more studies. There is a need for a study to investigate the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and results on the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had an impact on student achievement. The current economic issues in our country are forcing many school districts to deal with severe budget cuts. One of the possible budget cuts is the reduction of extracurricular activities offered by high schools around the country. School systems spend millions of dollars every year on extracurricular activities including athletics, band, orchestra, clubs, and leadership organizations. This study will help to determine what possible impacts on student achievement the reduction of extracurricular activities will have for the students.

Chapter III lists the five research hypotheses previously listed in chapter I. These questions were used to drive the research in this study. They were based on the literature review and the professional perspectives presented in the literature review. This chapter will also offer a description of the research methodology, a description of the participants, the research design, and the procedures used to collect and analyze the data.

#### Research Questions and Hypotheses

Extracurricular activities may play a significant role in the total high school experience. Millions of students participate in sports, band, chorus, orchestra, and student clubs. It is very important to study the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement. These following hypotheses were used to guide this study:

1. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their overall grade point average.
2. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their SAT scores.
3. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test results.
4. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their attendance record.
5. There was no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

### Research Design

This research study used only seniors at 12 of the 16 high schools in this district. The research was a quantitative study. There were four dependent variables, and there was one independent variable. The independent variable was participation in extracurricular activities during the participant's junior and senior years only. The researcher wanted to study participation in extracurricular activities for varsity Georgia High School Association sports and school sponsored clubs during the participant's junior and senior years. The dependent variables included the student's current GPA, SAT scores, Georgia High School Graduation Test results, and the student's attendance

rates. The variables were collected only one time on the survey completed by the participants. The data were analyzed to determine if participation in extracurricular activities impacts student achievement in the following categories: grade point average, SAT scores, success on the Georgia High School Graduation Test, and the student's attendance rate.

### Sample/Participants

The participants in the study were seniors attending twelve of the sixteen high schools in the school district. The school district is one of the largest school districts in the country, and the district falls into the top 50 largest districts in the country. The researcher chose to use only seniors based on the fact that they should have completed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (which is administered to every junior in the state), and the majority of the students should have attempted the SAT. Every senior in the high schools were eligible to participate in the study, but only the students that completed the parent permission form were allowed to take the survey.

The school district is located just outside a large city located in the state of Georgia. The background of the student population is extremely diverse. The largest demographic group of students in this county is made up of Caucasians. The second largest group is comprised of Blacks. The third largest group of students is Hispanics. Caucasians make up 47% of the students, Black students make up 30%, and Hispanic students make up 15%. The other demographic groups make up the final 8%.

The socioeconomic background of the students is also extremely diverse. The schools located in this school district range from the wealthiest areas in the state to some of the poorest areas in the state. According to the statistics, 70% of the residents in this county own their own home (Census Bureau, 2000). The median house price in

the county is \$147,600, but there are several neighborhoods that start in the one million dollar range. The median household income in 2007 was \$64, 655, but a little over 9% of the population still falls into the poverty range (Census Bureau, 2000). The eastern part of the county is one of the wealthiest areas in the state, and this area also has some of the most expensive house prices. The southern part of the county has some of the poorest conditions in the county and the state.

The county's population is very educated. Almost 90% of the population graduated from high school, and 40% of the population has at least a bachelor's degree. The level of education in the county has helped to create a very strong educational school system.

#### Instrumentation

The instrument used for this research study was developed by the researcher. It is a short survey that requests specific information from the participants. The survey asked the students to identify their gender, their current grade point average, their SAT score, their success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, and the average amount of days that they miss each year. The survey also requested the participant to list any varsity Georgia High School Association varsity sports or school sponsored clubs that the student has been involved in during their junior and senior school years. The survey supplied a list of the acceptable sports and school sponsored clubs for the participants to mark. Since the researcher is conducting a quantitative study, a pilot study for the survey was not necessary. The data collected by the survey were completely based on the student's answers. The accuracy of the data was also based on the accuracy and honesty of the student's answers that participated in the

study. The school district does not have another way of retrieving the data that the researcher needed, so the survey was created to gather the data for the study.

### Data Collection Procedures

The researcher received IRB approval from the school district where the twelve high schools were located (Appendix A). The researcher also received IRB from the University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix B). The IRB approvals were required before the researcher could collect any data. The data were collected from seniors at each of the high schools that participated in the study. The researcher only used high school seniors for this study, because the majority of the seniors had attempted the SAT and they took the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test as juniors. The participants for this study had to return a form granting the researcher parental permission to collect the data from the survey. The parent/student consent form can be located in Appendix C. After the permission form was returned, the students were allowed to fill out the five question survey (Appendix D). In order to collect the data, the researcher used the senior English teachers to collect this data since every student in the senior class has to complete senior English in order to graduate. This allowed the researcher to gain access to all of the seniors at the high schools. In order to help gain participation in the survey, the researcher randomly selected two seniors and two teachers from the different schools to win a \$25 gift card. The researcher hoped that the drawing provided an incentive for the students and teachers to participate in the survey and research study.

### Data Analysis

Since the researcher had received approval from the Office of Accountability, the principals at each high school in the district, and the participants completing the



surveys, the researcher analyzed the data collected from the surveys. The researcher analyzed the data by imputing all of the data into the SPSS software. The researcher used an independent samples t-test for research questions 1, 2, and 4 to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had a significant impact on student achievement in the areas of grade point average, SAT scores, and attendance rates. The researcher used chi squares to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had a significant impact on success on the Georgia High School Graduation Test. The interaction hypothesis (research questions 5) was tested using a two-way ANOVA. Each dependent variable was tested to determine if participation in extracurricular activities had a significant impact.

### Summary

Chapter III discussed the purpose of the study, who participated in the study, the survey instrument used to collect the data, how the data was collected, and how the data was analyzed. The results of the study should provide meaningful insight for school administrators and school districts to help determine if they should continue to fund extracurricular activities in the high schools. By determining the impact that participation in extracurricular activities had on student achievement, the school districts can make educated decisions on how to use their precious financial resources. Chapter IV and V will analyze and present the findings of the data collected in the study. This information will allow school districts across the state to help determine the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on grade point averages, SAT scores, state mandated graduation tests, and attendance rates.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to provide the findings of the quantitative study conducted by the researcher. This study focused on the impact that extracurricular activities had on student achievement. The extracurricular activities ranged from participation in varsity Georgia High School Association sports, high school music programs including marching band and chorus, and school sponsored clubs including National Honor Society and Beta Club. The study focused on the impact that participation in these extracurricular activities had on grade point average, SAT scores, success on the Georgia High School Writing Test, absentee rates, and whether or not gender had an impact on these categories. This was a quantitative study to determine the impact that extracurricular activities had on GPA, attendance rate, success on the Georgia High School Writing Test, and SAT scores. There was one independent variable and four dependent variables. The independent variable was participation in extracurricular activities, and the dependent variables were GPA, SAT scores, success on the Georgia High School Writing test, and attendance rates.

#### Collection of Data

The data for this study were collected by using student surveys that were given to senior students at twelve high schools in a large urban school district in the state of Georgia. Every senior attending these high schools were allowed to participate in the survey, but the students had to return a signed parent permission form prior to completing the student survey. The students were allowed to sign the permission form if they were over the age of eighteen. The surveys were handed out in all senior English

classrooms, since every senior must take English as a twelve grader. The researcher received 440 completed surveys and parent permission forms from the twelve high schools that participated in the study.

The survey asked the students for their gender, current grade point average, SAT score, whether or not they passed the Georgia High School Writing Graduation Test, and their attendance rate during their senior year. The survey also asked the students if they competed in any of the following varsity sports: football, softball, cheerleading, cross country, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, swim and dive, track, baseball, lacrosse, tennis, golf, soccer, and gymnastics. All of these sports are currently sanctioned by the Georgia High School Association as varsity sports for the state of Georgia. The survey also asked the students if they had participated in any high school music programs including: marching band, chorus, and orchestra. Finally, the survey asked the students if they had participated in any school sponsored clubs including: student government, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Beta Club, National Honor Society, Key Club, Foreign Language Club, and Drama Club.

### Descriptive Statistics

Prior to the discussion of the analysis of the five research questions, it is important to review the participants in the study. Out of the 12 high schools that were selected for this survey, there were 440 students ( $N=440$ ) that chose to participate in the study to determine the impact of participating in extracurricular activities had on student achievement. Every student that participated in the study was a senior at one of the 12 high schools that participated in the study. Only senior students were selected for this study because the majority of the seniors should have attempted the SAT and the

Georgia High School Writing Graduation Test by the time they were seniors. This information can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

*Survey Response Rates (N=440)*

	# Distributed	# Returned	% of Sample
School Level			
High School	2400	440	18.33

### Statistical Analysis

Millions of students participate in sports, band, chorus, orchestra, and student clubs across the United States. This study investigated the relationship between participation in extracurricular activities and student achievement. The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their overall grade point average.
2. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their SAT scores.
3. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in

extracurricular activities in terms of the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test results.

4. There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their attendance record.
5. There was no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

The data were collected by the researcher, and then the data were imputed and analyzed by using the SPSS software. The researcher used a t-test for research questions one, two, and four to determine if there was an impact on grade point averages, SAT scores, and attendance rates. Research question three was analyzed by using chi squared tests to determine the impact on the success rate on the Georgia High School Writing Graduation test. Finally, research question five was analyzed using a two-way anova to determine the interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

The first research question stated that there was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their overall grade point average. The researcher divided the extracurricular activities into three different categories: sports, music, and school clubs. The researcher felt that it was important to explore the significance of each of the three components that comprised extracurricular activities. Tables 2, 3, and 4 contain the means and results. The researcher used an alpha level of .05 for all statistical tests. The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = 1.766$ ,  $p = .078$ , between participation in

sports and grade point average (see Table 2). Even though there was not a significant difference, the students that participated in sports ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = .60$ ) had a slightly higher grade point average than the students that did not participate in any sports ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .63$ ). The results also indicated that there was a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = 2.547$ ,  $p = .011$ , between participation in music and grade point average. The students that participated in music programs ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) had a higher grade point average than the students that did not participate in the music programs ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .64$ ) (see Table 3). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = 13.856$ ,  $p < .001$ , between participation in school clubs and grade point average. The students that participated in school clubs ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) had a significantly higher grade point average than students that did not participate in clubs ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = .54$ ). The research hypothesis is accepted for participation in sports (no statistically significant difference), but it was rejected for participation in music programs and student clubs, because there was a statistically significant difference between participation in music programs and student clubs and grade point averages.

Table 2

*Impact of Participation in Sports on GPA, SAT, and Attendance Rate*

	<u>Sports</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
GPA	Yes	173	3.52	.60	1.77	438	.078
	No	267	3.42	.63	1.79	380	.075
SAT	Yes	157	1665	275.98	-1.20	362	.230
	No	207	1700	278.05	-1.20	337	.229
Attendance	Yes	173	.71	.72	.37	438	.714
	No	267	.69	.71	.37	363	.715

Table 3

*Impact of Participation in Music on GPA, SAT, and Attendance Rate*

	<u>Music</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
GPA	Yes	92	3.60	.51	2.547	438	.011
	No	348	3.42	.64	2.903	174	.004
SAT	Yes	86	1711	234.94	.987	362	.324
	No	278	1677	289.11	1.10	171	.273
Attendance	Yes	92	.57	.67	-1.97	438	.049
	No	348	.73	.72	-2.06	151	.040

Table 4

*Impact of Participation in School Clubs on GPA, SAT, and Attendance Rate*

	<u>Clubs</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
GPA	Yes	205	3.82	.49	13.86	438	< .001
	No	235	3.14	.54	13.95	437	< .001
SAT	Yes	196	1770	268.66	6.668	362	<.001
	No	168	1587	254.18	6.697	358	<.001
Attendance	Yes	205	.61	.70	-2.231	438	.026
	No	235	.77	.72	-2.234	432	.026

The second research question stated that there was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their SAT scores. The researcher divided participation in extracurricular activities into the categories of sports, music, and school clubs. The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference,  $t(362) = -1.023$ ,  $p = .230$  between participation in sports and SAT scores (See Table 2). The students that did not participate in sports ( $M = 1700$ ,  $SD = 278.05$ ) actually had a slightly higher SAT score than the students that participated in sports ( $M = 1665$ ,  $SD = 275.99$ ) (see Table 2). The results also indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference,  $t(362) = .987$ ,  $p = .324$  between participation in music programs and SAT scores (see Table 3). Even though there was not a significant difference, the students that participate in music programs ( $M = 1711$ ,  $SD = 234.94$ ) had



slightly higher SAT scores than the students that did not participate in music ( $M = 1677$ ,  $SD = 289.11$ ) (see Table 3). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference,  $t(362) = 6.668$ ,  $p < .001$  between participation in school clubs and SAT scores (see Table 4). The students that participated in school clubs ( $M = 1770$ ,  $SD = 268.67$ ) had higher SAT scores than students that did not participate in school clubs ( $M = 1586$ ,  $SD = 254.18$ ) (see Table 4). The research hypothesis question is accepted for participation in sports and music programs (no statistically significant difference), but is rejected for participation in school clubs since there is a statistically significant difference in participation in school clubs and SAT scores.

The fourth research hypothesis states that there was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their attendance record. Once again, the researcher will divide participation in extracurricular activities into three categories: sports, music, and school clubs. The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = .367$ ,  $p = .714$  between participation in sports and attendance rates (see Table 2). The students that participated in sports ( $M = .71$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) had a slightly higher rate of absentees than students that did not participate in sports ( $M = .69$ ,  $SD = .71$ ) (see Table 2). The results also indicated that there was a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = .570$ ,  $p = .049$  between participation in music programs and attendance rates (see Table 3). The students that participated in music programs ( $M = .57$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) missed fewer days than the students that did not participate in music programs ( $M = .73$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) (see Table 3). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference,  $t(438) = -2.231$ ,  $p = .026$  between participation in school clubs and attendance rates (see Table 4). The

students that participated in school clubs ( $M = .61$ ,  $SD = .70$ ) missed fewer days of school than the students that did not participate in school clubs ( $M = .77$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) (see Table 4). The research question four is accepted for participation in sports (no statistically significant difference), but it is rejected for participation in music programs and school clubs, because there is a statistically significant difference in participation in music and school clubs and attendance rates.

The third research question states that there was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test results. The data for research question 3 were analyzed by using a chi squared test to determine if there was a significant difference between participation in extracurricular activities and success rate on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test. Table 5 contains the results for the chi squares test, and the data of the students that passed and failed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test. A chi square test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between passing and failing the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test and participating in sports. The difference was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2$  ( $df=1$ ,  $N=440$ ) = 1.868,  $p = .172$ . The data indicated that 99.4% the students that participated in sports passed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, while 97.8% of the students that did not participate in sports also passed the Georgia Graduation Writing Test. A chi square test was also used to determine whether there was a significant difference between passing and failing the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test and participating in music programs. The difference was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2$  ( $df=1$ ,  $N=440$ ) = .253,  $p = .615$ . The data indicated that 97.8% of the

students that participated in music programs passed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, while 98.6% of the students that did not participate in music programs also passed the test. Finally, a chi square test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between passing and failing the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test and participating in school clubs. The difference was statistically significant,  $\chi^2$  (df=1, N=440) = 6.205,  $p = .013$ . The data indicated that 100% of the students that participated in school clubs passed the Georgia High School Graduation Test, but only 97.0% of the students that did not participate in school clubs passed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test. The research question is accepted for participation in sports and music programs (no statistically significant difference), but it is rejected for participation in school clubs and success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, because there is a statistically significant difference.

Table 5

*Chi Square Analysis for the Impact of Participation in Sports, Music Programs, and School Clubs on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test*

	<u>Writing Test</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Pass %</u>	<u>Chi squared</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Sports	Yes	172	99.4%	1.868	1	.172
	No	261	97.8%			
Music	Yes	90	97.8%	.253	1	.615
	No	343	98.6%			
Clubs	Yes	205	100%	6.205	1	.013
	No	228	97.0%			

The final research question states that there was no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average. The researcher used a 2-way anova to determine the significance of the interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall student grade point average. In order to test the research question, the researcher divided the participation into three categories: school sports, music programs, and school clubs. Table 6 contains the results of the statistical analysis determining the interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on grade point average.

Table 6

*Interaction between Gender and Participation in Extracurricular Activities on GPA*

	<u>Gender</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p</u>
Sports	Male	89	3.50	.62	.607	1, 436	.436
	Female	84	3.55	.57			
Music	Male	31	3.50	.53	.464	1,436	.496
	Female	61	3.66	.49			
Clubs	Male	78	3.82	.54	.031	1, 436	.859
	Female	127	3.82	.45			

The results indicated that the females grade point average that participated in sports ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .57$ ) was slightly higher than the males ( $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = .62$ ). The main effect was non-significant,  $F(1, 436) = .607$ ,  $p = .436$ . There was no interaction. The results also indicated that the females grade point average that participated in music programs ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = .49$ ) was slightly higher than the males ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = .53$ ). The main effect was non-significant,  $F(1, 436) = .464$ ,  $p = .496$ . There was no interaction. Finally, the results indicated that the females grade point average that participated in school clubs ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .45$ ) was the same as the males ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .54$ ). There was no interaction. The research question is accepted for all three categories of participation that there will be no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average

### Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the data collected through the student surveys. This chapter also presented the statistical analysis of the data imputed into the SPSS software. The findings of the analysis were mixed in regards to accepting or rejecting the research questions. The statistical analysis showed that the research question number one was accepted for participation in sports and grade point average, but it was rejected for participation in music programs and school clubs. The analysis also showed that research question two was accepted for participation in sports and music programs and SAT scores, but it was rejected for participation in school clubs. The analysis continued to reveal that research question four was accepted for sports and attendance rates, but it was rejected for participation in music programs and clubs. The analysis also revealed that the research question three was accepted for sports and school music programs and the Georgia High School Graduation Test, but it was rejected for participation in school clubs. Finally, the analysis revealed that research question 5 was accepted for sports, music programs, and school clubs. There was no interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

#### Introduction

Every school across the country is feeling the impact of No Child Left Behind and the importance of students performing on the state and national exams. No Child Left Behind was designed to improve student academic achievement, increase national test scores, raise the performance of students, and attract highly qualified professionals to the field of education (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Schools are being asked to perform at the highest possible levels, but their funding and resources are being diminished by the economic downturn of the American economy. The schools have been forced to determine where they are going to apply their scarce financial resources. According to Staples (2008), the schools are being forced to determine which programs they are going to continue to fund during this economic hardship. Many school districts across the country are making the decision to cut funding to non-essential academic programs including many extracurricular activities (Lemire, 2009). According to Cadwallader, et al. (2002), extracurricular activities are the activities that students participate in after the normal school day has ended. These activities include high school sports, music programs, and school sponsored clubs.

This research study contributed more analysis and information to the growing data across the country. If the economy continues to decline, school budgets will continue to be reduced. States, school districts, and school personnel will continue to have to make difficult decisions with their limited financial resources. The decision makers need to have current and relevant information to determine how they are going to decide their budgetary decisions. School officials do not want to cut funding to

programs that are increasing or have positive impacts on student achievement. Schools may have to decrease or cancel some non-essential programs, but they need to determine which programs will not affect student achievement in a negative manner. The schools do not want to cut programs that are actually increasing or helping student achievement.

School districts need research studies to determine what impacts student achievement and performance. It could be very easy for a school district to cut all non-essential academic programs in order to allocate their financial resources to improving test scores. If school districts cut funding to extracurricular activities, the districts might actually hurt student achievement. The literature regarding participation in extracurricular activities actually suggests that participation in extracurricular activities increases student achievement. According to Hass (2004), participation in extracurricular activities has a positive impact on student achievement by teaching the students discipline and a strong work ethic. These two qualities promote educational success. A study conducted by Hollrah (2001) indicated that students that participated in extracurricular activities learned character building lessons they could apply to their daily lives and study habits. A study conducted by Whitley (1998) indicated that participation in extracurricular activities had a positive impact on student achievement. The students that participated in athletics had a higher grade point average than the students that did not participate in sports.

Metzl and Shookhoff (2002) discussed the importance of extracurricular activities by revealing the hidden curriculum of participation in sports. The hidden curriculum actually helps students achieve higher results. The hidden curriculum can be defined as the benefits gained through participation in extracurricular activities.



Metzl and Shookhoff (2002) claim that team sports and participation in extracurricular activities teach students leadership, resilience, time management, and how to balance their life. Students also learn how to interact with other kids, coaches, and adults. They learn how to build positive relationships with the people that they are around on a daily basis. These are all traits that successful students demonstrate. This interaction ties in with the Institutional Logics Theory. Kids can gain an identity through their interactions (In this case participation in extracurricular activities) with other kids, adults, and their community.

This study sought to investigate the impact that participation in extracurricular activities had on student achievement. The study explored the impact that high school sports, school clubs, and music programs had on a student's grade point average, SAT score, success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, and their attendance rate. Finally, the study also explored whether gender and participation in extracurricular activities had an impact on student grade point average. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the researcher's study and show the relevance of that data to the theoretical framework and the literature review. This information will add to the existing literature and statistical analysis to help school administrators make intelligent decisions with their scarce financial resources.

### Conclusions and Discussion

The researcher received 440 of the 2400 surveys that were sent to twelve different high schools. This was a return rate of 18.33%. Three high schools did not return any surveys to the researcher, so 25% of high schools chose to not participate in the study. The return rate and the participation rate showed the difficulty of convincing students and teachers to participate in a voluntary survey. Many students were not

motivated to get the parental permission form signed in order to participate in the study. Some English teachers refused to take time from their classes to distribute the survey to their students.

H1: There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their overall grade point average.

It is important to remember that participation in extracurricular activities was divided into three categories: varsity high school sports, music programs, and school sponsored clubs. The statistical analysis indicated that there was not a statistical significant difference between participation in sports and grade point average, but the data did indicate that the students that did participate in sports ( $M = 3.52$ ) had slightly higher grade point averages than the students that did not participate in sports ( $M = 3.42$ ). The results also indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between participation in music and grade point average. The students that participated in music programs ( $M = 3.60$ ) had a higher grade point average than the students that did not participate in the music programs ( $M = 3.42$ ). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference, between participation in school clubs and grade point average. The students that participated in school clubs ( $M = 3.82$ ) had a significantly higher grade point average than students that did not participate in clubs ( $M = 3.14$ ). The data does show that the students that were involved in some type of extracurricular activity (varsity sports, school music programs, or school clubs) had higher grade point averages than the students that were not involved in any activities.

This data were consistent with other studies discussed in the literature review of this study. A study conducted by Eccles and Barber (1999) showed that 10<sup>th</sup> grade

students that were involved in team sports, leadership groups, and performing arts had higher grade point averages in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade than students that did not participate in these activities. Whitley (1998) also determined that participation in extracurricular activities had a positive impact on student achievement. Whitley's study determined that students who were involved in sports had higher grade point averages, lower absenteeism, and fewer discipline issues. This data also supports the Institutional Theory and the Institutional Logics Theory. This framework discusses the interaction between organizations and the cultural interactions of organizations. Students that participate in extracurricular activities interact with the schools, their community, and each other. Students can gain an identity from these interactions, and a school can gain an identity. The relationship between these interactions can define the success and failures of the students in the classroom and in other areas. Students can achieve success in football or marching band, and this success can impact their academics and their community.

H2: There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their SAT scores.

The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between participation in sports and SAT scores. The students that did not participate in sports ( $M = 1700$ ) actually had a slightly higher SAT score than the students that participated in sports ( $M = 1665$ ). The results also indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between participation in music programs and SAT scores. Even though there was not a significant difference, the students that participate in music programs ( $M = 1711$ ) had slightly higher SAT scores than the students that did

not participate in music ( $M = 1677$ ). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between participation in school clubs and SAT scores. The students that participated in school clubs ( $M = 1770$ ) had higher SAT scores than students that did not participate in school clubs ( $M = 1586$ ). With the exception of sports, the students that participated in school sponsored music programs and school clubs had higher SAT scores than the students that did not participate in these activities. The data indicated that if you are involved in school extracurricular activities, your SAT scores would be higher than students that choose to not participate in these programs.

This data were consistent with some other studies examined by the researcher in the literature review. A study conducted by Catterall, Chapeleau, and Iwanganga in 1997 showed that students who were involved in music programs scored higher on the SAT. Ponter (1999) also found positive impacts of music on student achievement. Even though the statistical analysis was not significant in all three areas of participating in extracurricular activities, the SAT scores for the students involved in the activities were higher than the students that were not involved in the activities. The interaction between the student and an extracurricular activity created another interaction with SAT scores. This interaction supports the theoretical framework discussed in this research study.

H4: There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of their attendance record.

The results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between participation in sports and attendance rates. The students that participated in sports ( $M = .71$ ) had a slightly higher rate of absentees than students that did not

participate in sports ( $M = .69$ ). The results also indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between participation in music programs and attendance rates. The students that participated in music programs ( $M = .57$ ) missed fewer days than the students that did not participate in music programs ( $M = .73$ ). Finally, the results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between participation in school clubs and attendance rates. The students that participated in school clubs ( $M = .61$ ) missed fewer days of school than the students that did not participate in school clubs ( $M = .77$ ). The data indicated that the students that were involved in these extracurricular activities missed fewer days than the students that were not involved in extracurricular activities.

This data were very consistent with other studies discussed in this research study. With the exception of sports, the students that were involved in music programs and school clubs missed fewer days than students not involved in extracurricular activities. The researcher wanted to note that athletes in the state of Georgia are occasionally forced to miss school for their competitions. This might have led to the slightly higher absenteeism rate for the students that participated in sports. The study conducted by Whitley (1998) actually indicated that athletes missed fewer days than students that were not athletes.

H3: There was no statistically significant difference between students who participate in extracurricular activities and students who do not participate in extracurricular activities in terms of the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test results.

The data indicated that there was not a significant difference between participation in sports and music programs and success on the Georgia High School

Graduation Writing test. There was a significant difference in the students that were involved in school clubs and the success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test. Even though there was not a significant difference, the students that participated in sports had a higher success rate than the students that did not participate in sports. The results indicated that 99.4% of the students that participated in sports passed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, but only 97.8% of the students not involved in sports passed. The results also indicated that 97.8% of the students that participated in music actually scored lower than the students that did not participate in music (98.6% pass rate). Finally, the results indicated that 100% of the students that participated in clubs passed the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test compared to 97.0% of the students that did not participate in school clubs.

This data were what the researcher expected to find. The trend established in the literature review showed that the students that are involved in extracurricular activities perform better academically. The difference might not always be statistically significant, but it showed that being involved increased student achievement. Many of the clubs stress leadership, time management, and building positive relationships. These qualities are all found in the hidden curriculum of participation in extracurricular activities.

H5: There was no statistically significant interaction between gender and participation in extracurricular activities on overall grade point average.

This data indicated that females had a slightly higher grade point average than males that participated in school sports and school music programs. The grade point averages were the same for males and females that participated in school clubs. There was no significant interaction between males and females and participation in

extracurricular activities. This result was what the researcher expected to find. Females tend to have slightly higher grade point averages than males. The researcher did not expect to find a significant interaction between participation in extracurricular activities and gender on overall grade point averages.

### Limitations

There were five major limitations that were apparent to the researcher for this research study. The first limitation was that the answers provided on the student survey were based on the student's honesty and knowledge of their current grade point average, SAT score, projected attendance rate, success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, and their participation in varsity sports, school clubs, and music programs. While there is no incentive for a student to not be honest with their answers, the survey did create the opportunity for students to not answer with complete honesty.

The second limitation of this study was that the researcher only used 12<sup>th</sup> grade students for the study. The researcher chose seniors because the majority of the seniors should have attempted the SAT and the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test. This choice did limit the amount of responses for the study, and it also reduced the number of the sample that could have participated in the study. A larger population could have attracted more participants, and it could have provided more data to be analyzed for the research study.

Another limitation of the study was the fact that several of the clubs selected by the researcher had a minimum grade point average to join the club. School clubs like National Honor Society, Beta Club, and Key club require their members to meet higher grade point averages compared to normal school clubs. This could mean that the

students that participated in school clubs might have had a higher than expected grade point average and SAT score.

Another limitation of the study was the fact that athletes do have to meet a minimum grade point average. This requirement might have slightly raised the grade point average of the athletes in the study. It is important to remember that the athletes had to meet the pass to play requirement. The athletes might not have had a higher grade point average, but they had to meet the requirement of passing five out of the six classes they were attempting.

Finally, the last limitation was that there were no real incentives for the students and teachers to complete the survey. The researcher encouraged students to participate by holding a drawing for gift cards, but many students were not motivated to get parental permission to participate in the study. The students that did get parental permission to participate in the study might be the students that are motivated to achieve at a higher level than a normal student. The teachers were also placed in a drawing for a gift card, but many did not want to disrupt their classroom to hand out the survey. There was not a real incentive for the teachers to encourage their students to participate in the study.

#### Recommendations for Policy or Practice

The researcher believes that school districts and school administrators need to continue to fund and incorporate extracurricular activities. The literature review and this study showed that students who are involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to achieve higher results than students that are not involved in extracurricular activities. This was not true for every part of the research study, but it is apparent that there are other benefits of participation in extracurricular activities other than higher



student achievement marks. The students that participate in extracurricular activities benefit from the hidden curriculum associated with participation. These students learn teamwork, dedication, success, failures, the ability to manage time, and the ability to build positive relationships with other students, coaches, parents, and community members. These qualities will make these students better all-around students and people.

The researcher also believes that school administrators should make it a priority to hire quality individuals into the roles of coaches and sponsors. These people have the ability have great impacts on the students that choose to participate in extracurricular activities. The students that choose to participate in these activities are typically the leaders of the student body in the school. It does not matter if they are the star quarterback or the class president; they are going to have an impact on the other students in the building. By surrounding them with quality adults, they will be allowed to grow as leaders of the school community. The coaches and sponsors can truly help to define the school culture, which can impact student achievement. Because participation in extracurricular activities can have such a strong impact on student achievement, schools need to hire the best possible teachers/coaches to surround their students.

The researcher believes that the information presented in this study could be very beneficial for school principals, school superintendents, and school boards. These individuals must make the tough the financial decisions concerning finances, hiring of employees, and what programs are offered to students. School principals can use this information to make sure that they are offering extracurricular activities to their students. They also should hire quality individuals to support these programs. The

superintendents should want to hire principals that will stress the four pillars (academics, athletics, fine arts, and service/leadership). Superintendents should want to hire principals that will support extracurricular activities to help produce well rounded students that achieve at higher rates. Finally, school boards should support the funding of extracurricular activities. These are the activities that have the ability to unite the entire school community through the interactions of the students, teachers, parents, and community members. Healthy and successful programs will lead to students performing better in the classroom.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

In the state of Georgia, the Graduation Tests are disappearing in the next two years. The students will be forced to take state mandated End of Course Tests. The students will need to pass these exams in order to graduate. These tests will be administered in United States History, Economics, Math I, Math II, GPS Algebra, Physics, Biology, 9<sup>th</sup> Literature, and American Literature. These are the tests that will be used as a part of determining a school's adequate yearly progress. The researcher believes that a study should be conducted investigating the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement in regards to the student's success on the state end of course tests.

The researcher also believes that a study should be done tracking the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement over a four year period. The same sample of students should be used as they progress through their high school career. This study would more accurately track the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on student achievement.

The researcher also believes that a study should be done examining the impact of student clubs on student achievement. The student clubs selected for the study should be clubs that do not have a minimum grade point average. The researcher chose too many clubs that required a high minimum grade point average. The use of clubs that do not require a minimum grade point average should provide some accurate information on the impact of participation in school clubs on student achievement.

Finally, the researcher believes that a study should be done examining the impact of raising or creating a minimum grade point average for athletes. In most states, the athletes must pass five out of the six classes they are attempting, but there is not a set grade point average they must meet. It would be very interesting to see what happens to SAT scores, graduation tests, and attendance rates if all athletes had to meet a minimum grade point average instead of the pass to play requirement.

### Summary

The impact of No Child Left Behind and the economic issues facing the country are forcing school districts to make tough budgetary decisions. Unfortunately, school districts are deciding to cut funding to non-essential academic programs like extracurricular activities. The school districts are allocating all of their scarce financial resources to hiring teachers and providing classroom resources in hopes of meeting the demands of high stakes testing created by the No Child Left Behind Legislation. The type of high stakes testing will continue to change, but it will always be present in determining adequate yearly progress. All school districts want to improve their test scores and student achievement. One of the possible components to help increase student achievement might already be present.

Participation in extracurricular activities has shown to have a wide range of positive impacts on student performance and achievement. Through participation in extracurricular activities, students learn the valuable qualities associated with the hidden curriculum of extracurricular activities. The students learn teamwork, dedication, time management, and the ability to build positive relationships with other students, teachers, coaches, parents, and community members. These qualities are applied to all of the student's endeavors including student achievement. Schools do not need to cancel their extracurricular programs, because they may actually decrease student achievement in the process.

This study explored the impact of extracurricular activities on student achievement. It focused on the impact that participation in sports, music programs, and school clubs had on student achievement: grade point average, SAT scores, success on the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test, and absentee rates. The results of this study and the review of literature support a positive impact created by participation in extracurricular activities on student achievement.

## APPENDIX A

## PARTICIPANT SCHOOL SYSTEM IRB APPROVAL

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

*A Community with a Passion for Learning*

February 23, 2012

Mr. Steven Craft  
 703 Woodland Place  
 Woodland, Georgia 30188

Dear Mr. Craft,

Your research project titled, Impact of Extra Curricular Activities on Student Achievement, has been approved. Listed below are the schools where approval to conduct the research is complete. Please work with the school administrator to schedule administration of instruments or conduct interviews.

High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School

High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School  
 High School

Should modifications or changes in research procedures become necessary during the research project, changes must be submitted in writing to the Academic Division prior to implementation. At the conclusion of your research project, you are expected to submit a copy of your results to this office. Results cannot reference the School District or any District schools or departments.

Research files are not considered complete until results are received. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact our office at

Sincerely,

Chief Academic Officer

BOARD OF EDUCATION

SUPERINTENDENT

## APPENDIX B

## THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI IRB APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.6820 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/irb](http://www.usm.edu/irb)

## NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.

Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **12011701**

PROJECT TITLE: **The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement at the High School Level**

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

RESEARCHER/S: **Steven Craft**

COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Education & Psychology**

DEPARTMENT: **Educational Leadership & School Counseling**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF PROJECT APPROVAL: **01/31/2012 to 01/30/2013**

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**

**Institutional Review Board Chair**

## APPENDIX C

## PARENT/STUDENT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and have decided to allow my child to participate in the study titled The Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement at the High School Level to be conducted at my child's school between the dates of 01/30/12 and 02/17/12. I understand that the signature of the principal indicates approval for the research project. I understand the purpose of the research project will be examining the impact that participation in extracurricular activities has on grade point averages, SAT scores, and absenteeism in school and that my child will participate in the following manner:

## 1. Answering a Survey

Potential benefits of the study are:

1. Understanding the Impact of Extracurricular Activities on Student Achievement
2. Maintaining and enhancing athletic programs across the county

I agree to the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw my child from the study at any time should I choose to discontinue participation.

- The identity of participants will be protected. The data collected on the surveys will be completely anonymous.
- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved to my child participating in the study.
- Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect either student grades or placement decisions (or if staff are involved-will not affect employment status or annual evaluations.) If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the school of my decision.
- If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact Steven Craft at **770-578-7900 ext. 275, through email at Steven.Craft@Cobbk12.org, or through mail at 703 Woodland Place Woodstock, GA 30188.**

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Parent

Date

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Student

Date

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Principal

Date

## APPENDIX D

## SURVEY FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS.

Please Mark the correct Response:

1. Gender (Please Circle the Correct Response):

**MALE OR FEMALE**

2. Current GPA: \_\_\_\_\_

3. SAT Score (combined total): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you pass the Georgia High School Graduation Writing Test (Please Circle the Correct Response):

**YES or NO**

5. Attendance rate during their senior year (Please Circle the Correct Response). Please mark the average number of days that you miss during the school year:

**Less than 3 days a year**

**3-7 days a year**

**More than 7 days a year**

6. Please Circle any varsity GHSA sports or clubs (Only School Sponsored Sports or Clubs) that you participated in during your junior or senior year.

**GHSA Varsity Sports:**

**Football**

**Basketball**

**Lacrosse**

**Softball**

**Wrestling**

**Tennis**

**Cheerleading**

**Swim and Dive**

**Golf**

**Cross Country**

**Track**

**Soccer**

**Volleyball**

**Baseball**

**Gymnastics**

**Music Programs**

**Marching Band**

**Chorus**

**Orchestra**

**School Clubs**

**Student Government (SGA)**

**Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)**

**Beta Club**

**National Honor Society (NHS)**

**Key Club**

**Foreign Language Club**

**Drama Club**



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